# CLOSE-TO-THE-EDGE PROVINCIAL PARK AND PROTECTED AREA

## PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

**March 2003**

Approved by:

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Date: March 18/03

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Date:

# CLOSE-TO-THE-EDGE PROVINCIAL PARK AND PROTECTED AREA
## Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

This approximately 700 hectare park and protected area is located approximately 160 km northeast of Prince George. The park and protected area are located in the Dezaiko Range of the Hart Ranges. Limestone and karst formations are found throughout the Hart Ranges, resulting in numerous caves, underground drainage systems, and fossil occurrences.

**Primary Role**

The primary role of the park is to protect the internationally significant Close to the Edge cave which has the deepest shaft in British Columbia, is the second deepest overall cave in Canada/USA (440 m), and is among the 50 deepest caves in the world. The cave was discovered in 1983, but the bottom was not reached until 1986. The primary shaft drops 253 m straight down, and is about 23 m in diameter. Other caves included in this park are the Twin Falls Resurgence (the outlet for Close to the Edge) and Bluebell on the west side of Hedrick Creek. Given the significance of the cave features, the park and protected area provide internationally significant caving opportunities.

A portion of the overall area was established as a protected area under the *Environment and Land Use Act* to allow for the conservation, use and maintenance of a road through the area for the purpose of providing access to forest lands and other resources beyond the protected area.

| **Known Management Issues** | **Response** |
|---|---|
| Risk to public safety in using the caves | • Because of its depth and vertical shaft, Close to the Edge cave is particularly dangerous and suitable only for very experienced cavers. Meetings will be held on an annual basis with the caving community to monitor cave use and necessary public safety requirements.<br>• Establish rescue protocol with caving organizations and Provincial Emergency Program (PEP).<br>• Should the cave begin to attract less experienced cavers, access management controls may have to be undertaken. |
| Protection of cave features - Cave management strategy | A monitoring program may be undertaken in the future to ensure recreational use is not impacting the cave features. |
| Future road access – a road up Hedrick Creek would increase accessibility to the caves. | If a road is to be constructed, the review and impact studies will address potential impacts on the caves and wildlife habitat and identify appropriate mitigation measures. |
| Appropriate recreational use (Snowmobiling, mechanized activities (mountain biking), motorized water activities, aircraft access) | These issues were deferred at the Prince George LRMP to a future park planning process. In the interim, the following use is proposed as acceptable:<br>• Helicopter access |

**Zoning**

The park (414 hectares) and protected area (288 hectares) are zoned Special Feature in their entirety in recognition of the uniqueness of the cave system. If the construction of the road proceeds, the zoning scheme for the protected area will be reconsidered.

## CONSERVATION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Representation** | | |
| • ecosection | | Southern Hart Ranges (SHR). 19.54% of this ecosection is protected. Close-to-the-Edge contributes only 0.4% of this overall representation. |
| • biogeoclimatic subzone/variant | | ESSFwk2 – 10.86% protected. Close-to-the-Edge contributes only 0.29% of the the overall representation of this ecosystem.<br>ICHvk2 – 10.43% protected. Close-to-the-Edge contributes only 1.6% to the overall representation of this ecosystem. |
| **Special Feature** | X | Internationally significant caves. |
| **Rare/Endangered Values** | | No assessment undertaken to date |
| **Scientific/Research Opportunities** | X | Cave monitoring (use levels, protection of features) and inventory |

## RECREATION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Representation**: | | |
| • backcountry | | |
| • destination | X | Internationally significant cave features and caving opportunities. |
| • travel corridor | | |
| • local recreation | | |
| **Special Opportunities** | | |
| **Education/Interpretation Opportunities** | | |

## CULTURAL HERITAGE

| | |
|---|---|
| **Representation** | Not known |
| **Special Feature** | Not known |

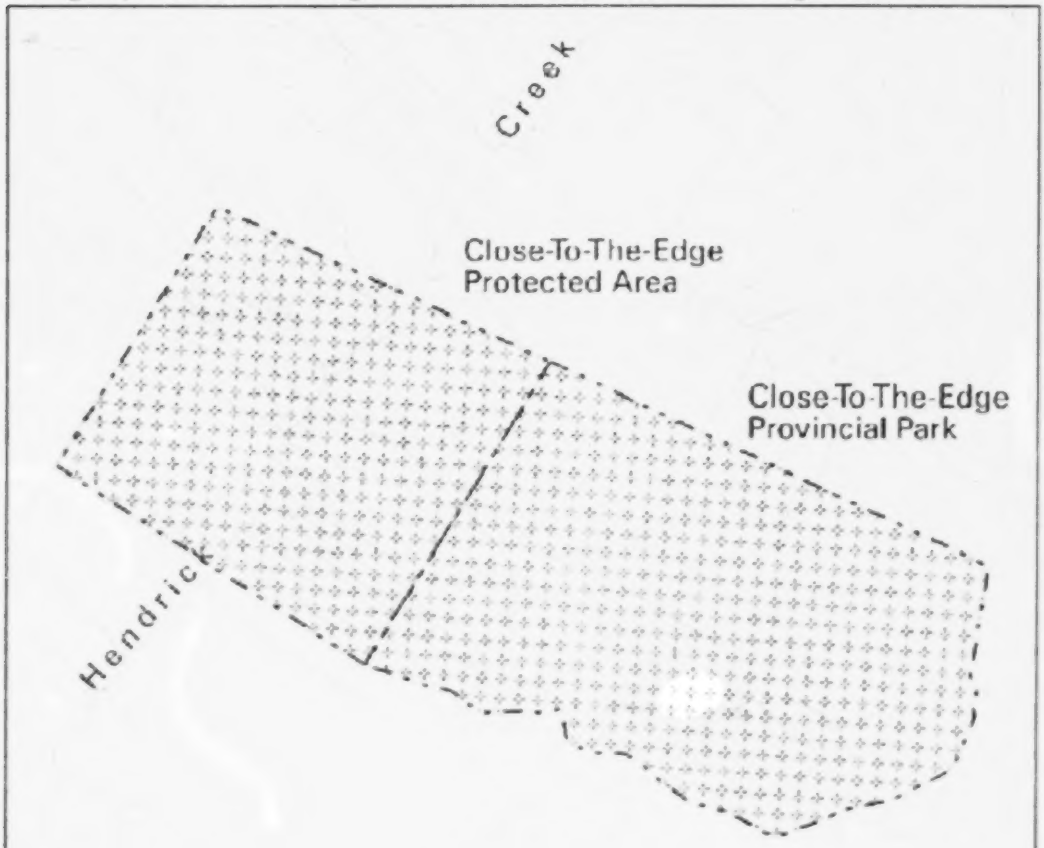
## OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Other Designations** | | Future road access may be required for resource activities upstream on Hedrick Creek, and is allowed in the protected area portion (not the provincial park) |
| **Relationship to Other PAs** | X | Established through the Prince George LRMP. Other parks and protected areas established through this process include: Evanoff, Erg Mountain, Slim Creek, Sugarbowl-Grizzly, Arctic Pacific Lakes, Ptarmigan Creek and an addition to Purden Lake. |
| **Co-operative Management Arrangements** | X | Area of interest by the Lheidli T'enneh Nation |
| **Partnerships** | | |
| **Vulnerability** | X | Sensitivity of cave features through increased profile and use.<br>The Conservation Risk Assessment Process identified 2 risk factors (the shape and the size of the park) for the ecological reserve and rated them as low significance. No stressors/threats were identified for the park. |
| **Relationship to Other Strategies** | X | Established through the Prince George LRMP. |

**Area:** Park – 414 ha
Protected Area – 288 ha

**Date of establishment:** Park – June 29, 2000
Protected Area – January 25, 2001

Zoning Map - Close-To-The-Edge Provincial Park and Close-To-The-Edge Protected Area




Projection: Alberta Equal Areas
Datum: NAD83

Special Feature

Protected Area Boundary

Produced for: Mar [illegible]
Ministry of Water, Land and Air
Protection by: MSRM, Decision
Support Services

This is a spatial representation only and should not be used for legal purposes